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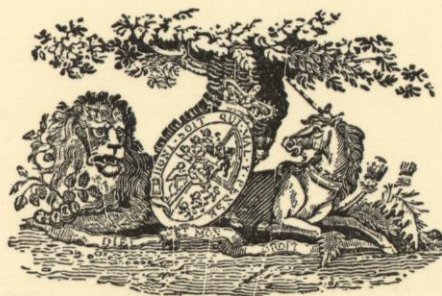
"North of Franconia"

White Mountains Railroad

(1848-1873)

ROBERT M. EDGAR





"Were American Newcomen to do naught else, our work is well done if we succeed in sharing with America a strengthened inspiration to continue the struggle towards a nobler Civilization—through wider knowledge and understanding of the hopes, ambitions, and deeds of leaders in the past who have upheld Civilization's material progress. As we look backward, let us look forward."

—CHARLES PENROSE

*Senior Vice-President for North America
The Newcomen Society of England*



This statement, crystallizing a broad purpose of the Society, was first read at the Newcomen Meeting at New York World's Fair on August 5, 1939, when American Newcomen were guests of The British Government

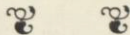
"Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda"

"NORTH OF FRANCONIA"
White Mountains Railroad
(1848-1873)

An Address at Littleton



AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, *through the years, has honored numerous rail transportation systems, both in the United States of America and in Canada, and has honored the memories of pioneers who pushed these early rails through territory where no steam locomotive ever before had penetrated. Such a Newcomen manuscript is this, celebrating the 100th Anniversary (1853-1953) of the arrival, at Littleton, New Hampshire, of the first railroad train to open up a celebrated vacation region: the White Mountains!*



WINNIPISEOGEE LAKE!

NORTH CONWAY!

White & Franconia MOUNTAINS!

Route from Boston, via BOSTON & MAINE and COCHECHO
RAIL ROADS, STEAMER DOVER and STAGES from
Wolfboro' and Centre Harbor.

This is the only Route that traverses the Whole Length of the Lake!



CHANGE OF TIME

COMMENCING MONDAY, JUNE 21, 1858.

LEAVE BOSTON & MAINE DEPOT, BOSTON,

At 7.30 A. M., and 3.00 P. M.

LEAVE DOVER AT 10.10 A. M., 1.00 AND 5.55 P. M.

BY FIRST TRAIN WILL CONNECT WITH

STEAMER DOVER,

At 11.15 A. M., for WOLFBO' and CENTRE HARBOR, thence by
STAGES through to CONWAY same evening. Proceeding next day to the

GLEN HOUSE, OR GIBBS',

In season to dine. Also, connect at Centre Harbor with STAGES for
MEREDITH, connecting with P. M. Trains for Plymouth.

By **SECOND TRAIN** will connect with STEAMER DOVER at 4.00
P. M., arrive at Wolfboro' at 4.45 P. M., Centre Harbor at 6.00

P. M., and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, for Meredith.

By **THIRD TRAIN**, will arrive at ALTON BAY at 8.00 P. M.

RETURNING,

Steamer Dover leaves Meredith, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at
4.45 A. M.; Centre Harbor daily, at 6.00 A. M. and 1.15 P. M. or on arr.
of Stages from the Mountains; Wolfboro' at 7.30 A. M. and 2.30 P. M. for

COCHECHO RAILROAD,

Connecting at Dover with Boston & Maine Trains for BOSTON & PORTLAND.

7 TICKETS FOR THIS ROUTE CAN BE PROCURED AT PRINCIPAL STATIONS ON
BOSTON AND MAINE ROAD.

PASSENGERS FOR THE MOUNTAINS VIA LAKE WINNIPISEOGEE

Will call for Tickets and see their Baggage Checked or Marked for COCHECHO R. R.

For further particulars, and STAGE CONNECTIONS, see SNOW'S BOSTON PATHFINDER, APPLETON'S
and DINSMORE'S NEW-YORK GUIDES.

GEO. C. KIMBALL, Supt.

STEVEN JOE PRINTING HOUSE, TRAVELLER BUILDING, BOSTON.

"Change of Time"

June 21, 1858

"North of Franconia"

White Mountains Railroad

(1848-1873)

R O B E R T M . E D G A R

MEMBER OF THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY

VICE-PRESIDENT

BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD

BOSTON

MASSACHUSETTS



THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA
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1953

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ROBERT M. EDGAR



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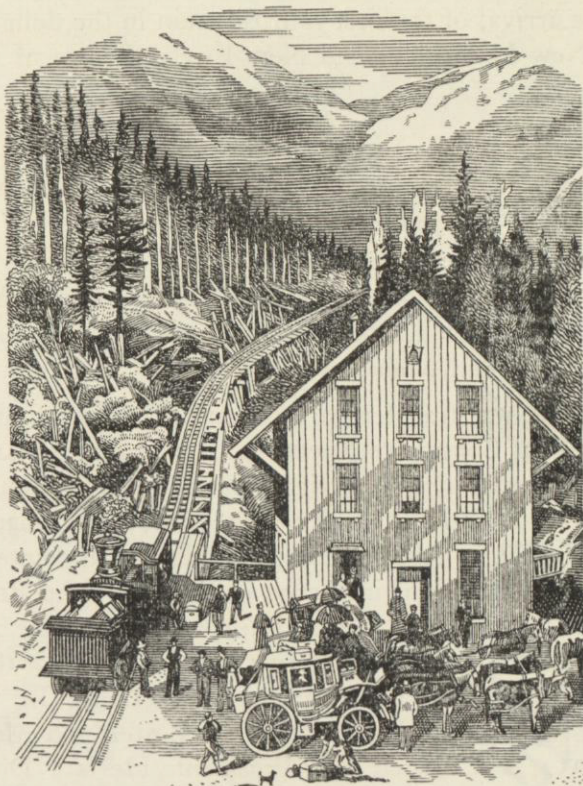
This Newcomen Address, dealing with the history of the early railroads into the White Mountains of New Hampshire and celebrating the 100th Anniversary (1853-1953) of the arrival at Littleton of the first steam railroad train, was delivered at the "1953 New Hampshire Luncheon" of The Newcomen Society in North America, held at Thayer's Hotel in Littleton, New Hampshire, U.S.A., when Mr.

*Edgar was the guest of honor,
on August 1, 1953*



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INTRODUCTION OF MR. EDGAR, AT LITTLETON ON AUGUST 1, 1953, BY MARSHALL B. DALTON OF BOSTON, PRESIDENT OF THE BOSTON MANUFACTURERS MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY; VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW ENGLAND COMMITTEE, IN THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA.

My fellow members of Newcomen:

IT is with more than ordinary satisfaction that I undertake the pleasant duty of presenting our guest of honor at this New Hampshire Newcomen Luncheon commemorating the centennial of the old White Mountains Railroad—for many years now a part of the Boston and Maine system,—and cele-

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brating the arrival of the first railroad train in the delightful and typically New Hampshire and New England town of Littleton.



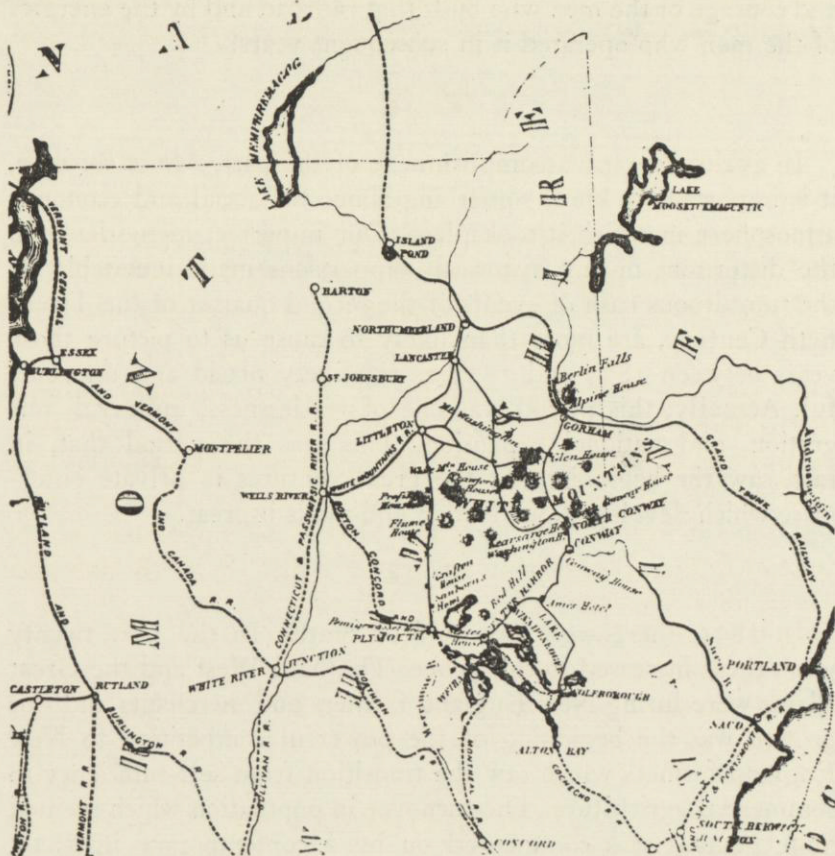
My friend, "Red" Edgar, is a New England product by birth—by education—by business experience. Born in Watertown, Massachusetts, he graduated from Dartmouth College in 1928, and, within the year, joined the Boston and Maine Railroad as a clerk in the Freight Traffic Department. He has been associated with the Boston and Maine ever since.

In 1936, he was transferred to Montpelier, Vermont, returning to Boston as Commerce Agent, in 1938. Later the same year, he was appointed Division Freight Agent with Headquarters in Concord, New Hampshire. Three years later, he was made Assistant General Freight Agent, at Boston. He was appointed Assistant to the Vice-President in charge of Traffic of the Boston and Maine and the Maine Central Railroads, in 1942; and, two years later, Assistant to the Executive Vice-President of the Maine Central Railroad with headquarters at Portland. In 1946, he became Assistant to the President of the Boston and Maine and, in June 1952, was elected Vice-President. He is a Director of the Mystic Terminal Company, the Boston Garden-Arena Corporation, the Boston Professional Hockey Association, and The New England Council.



Gentlemen—I am very happy to present our guest of honor and fellow-member: ROBERT MILTON EDGAR, Vice-President of the Boston and Maine Railroad.





*Railroads in the White Mountains
in the 1880's*

My fellow members of Newcomen:

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO TODAY a little steam locomotive bearing the name *Reindeer* puffed into Littleton over the rails of the newly-built White Mountains Railroad, having hauled a combination baggage, express and mail car, and a passenger coach with passengers from Woodsville, Bath, and Lisbon. This was the first step in the opening of the White Mountains by rail! As we look back on this significant event on its One Hundredth Anniversary date, we are inspired by the character

and courage of the men who built that railroad and by the energies of the men who operated it in subsequent years.



In evaluating any accomplishment of the past, *Mr. Chairman*, it is important to know something about the social and economic atmosphere in which it took place. Our imperfect memories, and the distortions in any historical comparisons made inevitable by the tumultuous rush of events of the second quarter of the Twentieth Century, are more than likely to cause us to picture those years between 1835 and 1855 as relatively placid and uneventful. Actually, this period was one of restlessness, upheaval, migration, and national expansion. This was the period that, in fact, saw the beginnings of the great ventures in private enterprise which developed our Nation and made it great.



In 1835, there were twenty-four States. In the next twenty years these increased to thirty-one. The Mid-West and the Great Plains were luring New England farmers and merchants and this growth was the beginning of the powerful competition to New England farmers which saw the transition from self-sufficiency to commercial agriculture. The turnover in population which seemed quite general was commented on by a contemporary in 1835, who complained that not one man in twenty now lived where his father had lived or did as his father had done.



In 1855, a publication called *The New England Farmer* commented contemptuously on the nomadic character of the New England population and its bad effect upon the successful prosecution of agriculture in New England, saying: "This spirit of restlessness, of dissatisfaction with our present condition and desire to improve it by change is attempted to be sanctified by calling it 'the spirit of the age,' or 'indomitable Yankee enterprise.' The letters back home from Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri told of cheap land, healthful climate, of the ease of turning

and planting the rich and productive soil. In 1849, the discovery of gold in California started many New Englanders for the West, never to return."



Within New England itself, the north country towns began to feel the pull of the urban regions, and a population drift to industrial cities in Massachusetts began, followed by the pull of New Hampshire's own industrial cities. Between 1840 and 1870, the annual production of boots and shoes in New Hampshire increased sixteen times. The value of cotton and woolen goods produced increased about ten times, while the aggregate annual value of manufactured goods increased from 13 millions to 95 millions of dollars. This industrialization that was progressing so rapidly *plus* the increasing desire and need for people to move about more than they ever had before made improved transportation between New England's communities imperative. It became apparent to many farsighted individuals that a string of cars on a road of rails pulled by a steam locomotive, such as had been developed in England, would be the answer to the need for something better than small barges on narrow canals, or teams and stagecoaches on land.



A number of groups of both urban and rural men had the courage to do something about it, and, after 1835, the northward reach of the railroads was relatively rapid. The Boston and Lowell started operating in 1835, the Nashua & Lowell was opened in the Autumn of 1838, and the Concord Railroad, from Nashua through Manchester to Concord, was opened for traffic in 1842. Here there came a pause. Concord was the railhead, the gateway to the north country; and a considerable body of opinion existed that this was the way it should remain, stimulated partially from an abundance of caution and partly from a selfish desire to preserve what appeared to be the economic benefits to Concord of being a terminal and gateway, rather than a way-station on the rail route to the north.

In 1840, the New Hampshire Legislature resolved the then troublesome question of whether or not a railroad corporation had the right to take land for its right-of-way under eminent domain, by passing a law which required a railroad to pay to a landowner whatever price could be agreed upon between them. As might be expected, this had an adverse effect temporarily on some railroad expansion. However, out of the cauldron of politics, for this had become a burning issue, emerged the first railroad law of the State, at the 1844 session. This new law gave fledgling and yet unchartered railroads new hope, since they were qualified as *public utilities*, and thus armed with new powers to acquire rights-of-way on a reasonable and practical basis, new charters were sought and those which were ready to build got construction underway.



On December 27, 1844, the New Hampshire Legislature granted a charter to the Northern Railroad. It was opened from Concord to Franklin two years and one day later, and reached White River Junction, in 1848. The Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers Railroad, on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River, was opened the same year from White River Junction to Wells River, reaching St. Johnsbury two years later, thus completing a through rail route to the north country from Boston *via* Concord, White River Junction, and up the Connecticut River to the northeastern corner of Vermont. The towns in the Ammonoosuc Valley were now within a fairly short distance by country highway of a rail connection to Boston.



On the same December 27, 1844 that the Northern was chartered, a charter also was granted to the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad to build from Concord to Woodsville and Wells River. Both the Northern and the Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers recognized that another railroad from Concord to Wells River *via* Plymouth and Woodsville would open a competing route for traffic to and from the north country and vigorously opposed the building of the Boston, Concord & Montreal. As a

result of this opposition the building of that road was somewhat retarded, but it finally got under way and entered what is now Laconia in 1848, Plymouth was reached in 1849, Warren in 1851, and, after surmounting great construction difficulties, went into Woodsville on May 10, 1853.



Thus, there came into being within a period of eight years, the railroad lines across New Hampshire from Boston to Woodsville and Wells River, with two routes available north of Concord. In 1846, construction began on the Atlantic & St. Lawrence, now the Grand Trunk, to run from Portland to Montreal. They reached the Maine-New Hampshire state line beyond Bethel, Maine in 1851, and the connection was made with the Canadian company at the Vermont border, and the line opened to Montreal in July 1853. And so it was, that in the early part of 1853, one hundred years ago, the White Mountains area had been surrounded, but *not penetrated by* railroads.



On December 25, 1848, the White Mountains Railroad was incorporated and, on February 6, 1849, an organization meeting was held at the Union House at Littleton. This line was chartered to run from a point on the Boston, Concord & Montreal in Haverhill, through Haverhill, Bath, Lisbon, Littleton, Bethlehem, Whitefield, Dalton, and Lancaster, and to a connection with the Atlantic & St. Lawrence. The first Board of Directors was chosen at this organization meeting and was made up of Ira Goodall of Bath, as president, Andrew Woods of Bath, David G. Goodall of Lisbon, Ebenezer Eastman of Littleton, Morris Clark of Whitefield, Levy Sargent of Manchester, and John Pierce of Bethlehem. Lacking the sources of capital that existed elsewhere, these men set out to raise the money to build their railroad by getting subscriptions to their stock from their families, friends, and acquaintances, as well as from the tradesmen and farmers who lived and worked in the towns through which the proposed railroad would run.

The first *Annual Report* to the stockholders of the White Mountains Railroad was made in 1850, and it noted a possible source of future difficulty in pointing out that their connection with the Boston, Concord & Montreal, as it appeared to them at that moment, was by no means a certainty. Some people had expressed the opinion that the Boston, Concord & Montreal could never surmount the heights at Warren, but the White Mountains Railroad directors pointed out that the road already had reached Plymouth, that the grading was progressing to Warren, with only twenty miles remaining to be contracted for. An application had been made to the Legislature, however, for an extension of the White Mountains Railroad charter to the west bank of the Connecticut River to insure a connection with the Connecticut and Passumpsic should anything happen to the Boston, Concord & Montreal.



J. S. Gregg, a civil engineer of Boston, had been engaged to furnish the preliminary survey, map the road, and accurately estimate the expense of construction. He covered the thirty-eight mile route from Wells River to Lancaster between October 11 and November 25, 1848. Mr. Gregg reported an estimated cost of building the line from Woodsville to Littleton of \$130,718. The directors were cheered by this report and went ahead with their plans to raise the necessary money. In less than two years they had obtained subscriptions for \$50,000 and optimism was expressed when they said: "We have assurances from various quarters abroad not only of good will in our prosperity and success, but in that deeper feeling which feels in the pocket."



A most significant fact of this project was that it was conceived, financed, and completed almost entirely by local people, residents of the Ammonoosuc Valley. Perhaps they were a little ahead of their time and perhaps their optimism as to the ultimate success of their railroad was not justified in the light of subsequent difficulties, but it is important to remember that this was a local project in all of its aspects and will ever remain a monument to the courage and persistence of its originators.

Their belief in the success of their railroad was founded, of course, on the assumption that they would carry passengers to and from their connection at Woodsville, but they wisely placed proper emphasis on the freight that would be hauled. The idea of the growing industry of the area is afforded by their review of the potential traffic. There was, of course, good timber in vast quantities throughout the territory. Bath had a woolen mill, several saw mills, a starch mill, a grist mill, and a machine shop. Lisbon had about the same. Littleton, the busiest town north of Lebanon, had two woolen mills, two saw mills, a starch mill, a grist mill, machine shop, iron foundry, and a scythe factory, using iron and coal in quantity.



At a stockholders meeting held in Bath, in December 1850, the Directors were "authorized to let the substructure of the road, from the line of the Boston, Concord & Montreal road to Littleton Village and to assess the shares to pay the cash part of the contract, provided that sufficient should, in the best judgment of the Directors, be subscribed to do this, so as to leave the corporation free of debt when done." On the strength of this authorization, the Directors, in March 1851, made a contract with Robert Morse, John E. Chamberlain, James L. Hadley, and Joseph Coburn of Rumney, doing business as Morse, Chamberlain & Company, to do the grading, construct the bridges, and lay the superstructure ready for cars for \$108,750, one-half to be paid in stock and one-half in cash. At this time, 737 shares of stock had been subscribed for, of which a little over one-third had been taken by eighty-three citizens of Littleton.

The Chief Engineer of the company, T. J. Carter, made several changes in the location as originally suggested by Mr. Gregg and, with the approval of the Directors, the line was built as Carter laid it out. Work was started in the Spring of 1851 at Bath. The Boston, Concord & Montreal, at this time, was at Warren ready to attack the heights, but with 23 miles and two years of hard work ahead of them before they would reach Woodsville and the connection with the White Mountains Railroad. The crossing of the summit required three-quarters of a mile of rock-

cutting, some of it sixty feet deep. The work is said to have cost \$150,000 and required the labor of 150 men for a year and a half.



By this simultaneous construction, the White Mountains line was finished and the connection was made at Woodsville within two months of the completion of the Boston, Concord & Montreal. With modern, earth-moving machinery, drills and explosives, the building of twenty-one miles of railroad would not be considered a difficult undertaking. One hundred years ago, however, this and all other railroad construction was largely arduous and dangerous hand work.



Like many other railroad projects of the time, as the work progressed, difficulty in collecting the sums subscribed for the stock increased. After the first assessment, which was met promptly, 25 percent defaulted on the second, and people holding five or more shares met the demand. By the time the third assessment came around those who responded were the Board of Directors and their immediate friends. This was the beginning of financial troubles that lasted for many years and resulted in continuous legal battles by the remaining stockholders, contractors, and others. More money was needed and, with no more payments on common stock obtainable, some preferred stock was issued. When it came time to purchase the rails no more equity capital could be raised and the road was mortgaged to secure bonds which were issued in the amount of \$180,000. In this manner the railroad was financed to completion. The trustees under this mortgage were Ira Goodall and Daniel Patterson of Bath and Stephen Kendrick of Franklin. The bonds were held almost entirely by Benjamin T. Reed of Boston, E. J. M. Hale of Haverhill, Massachusetts, and George Minot of Boston. During these two trying years of construction, complicated by legal and financial difficulties, there were several changes in the make-up of the Board. John Pierce was succeeded by Ezra C. Hutchins of Bath; Andrew Woods and Levy Sargent resigned in 1851 and were replaced

by Samuel P. Peavey of Landaff and by George B. Redington of Littleton.



The Directors realized even before the line was built that they would do well to arrange for either the Passumpsic or the Boston, Concord & Montreal to run their cars and engines over it and save the White Mountains Railroad the expense of purchasing locomotives and cars. With the Boston, Concord & Montreal connection assured, a contract was entered into, on July 1, 1853, for that road to run its trains over the White Mountains Railroad for one year, for the sum of \$7,000. The early paternal interest on the part of the Boston, Concord & Montreal was evidenced by the following statement made by its Directors in explaining this arrangement to the stockholders: "As that road forms in fact an extension of ours no new outlays will be incurred and by running our trains the additional distance at a moderate increase in some items of expense, we can afford to work their line much cheaper than it can be done independently and thereby afford important assistance to that corporation at a time when all new railroads are subject to difficulties of various kinds in the completion of their equipment of their lines."



Some passenger service was run from Woodsville to Lisbon on an irregular schedule in July, but it was *on Monday, August first, 1853*, that the first train came into Littleton! Naturally, this caused the congregation of a large number of people who had come to see the train, many of whom were seeing one for the first time. The *Reindeer* whistled, the people cheered, and the railroad had come to the heart of the White Mountains region.



Under Boston, Concord & Montreal operation, a round trip of passenger service and a round trip of freight service was run daily, except Sunday, between Woodsville and Littleton, except in the Winter, when one round trip of a mixed freight and passenger train made up all of the service offered.

Things were close to desperate right from the start. In the first year, revenues were entirely inadequate and the future was made all the more precarious when the Boston, Concord & Montreal turned the operation back to the owners, on August 1, 1854.



The railroad struggled along, never owning a locomotive of its own, hiring motive power and cars from the Boston, Concord & Montreal, The Passumpsic, the Northern, and the Vermont Central. The storm clouds on the horizon continually darkened. The shadows of impending catastrophe deepened as the contractors, who claimed a lien on the property, incumbent and former Directors, various stockholders, and the Trustees of the 1853 mortgage all started taking steps to protect their rights. On September 24, 1856, the road defaulted on the interest on the bonds and the legal battles began. The line was placed in the hands of a receiver by the Supreme Court on April 30, 1857 and, on November 3, 1858, a sale was held at Bath where George Minot, acting for himself, Reed, and Hale, purchased the railroad for \$24,000. On November 23rd, Minot and his associates, again at a meeting at Littleton, in this same building in which we are gathered, reorganized the company under the name of the White Mountains (N.H.) Railroad.



Negotiations at once were progressed to a conclusion to have the Boston, Concord & Montreal lease the new company, concluding in a contract for five years, at an annual rental of \$10,000. In 1863, on the expiration of this lease, a new one for a twenty year term was executed. It was not until 1871 that the Boston, Concord & Montreal could report that the suits in equity of the old White Mountains Railroad and others, *versus* the Boston, Concord & Montreal and the White Mountains (N.H.) R. R. had been amicably settled and discharged.

This settlement removed all corporate obstacles to a consolidation of the companies and the Boston, Concord & Montreal, in its *27th Annual Report* in 1873, said: "The union of the White

Mountains (N.H.) R. R. with this corporation, has been accomplished on the terms proposed in the vote of this corporation, at the last Annual Meeting on that subject. The stockholders of that road concluded to take the bonds of this company in exchange for their stock, as authorized by the vote referred to, and the stock will be surrendered for cancellation accordingly. The completion of that union is fortunate for this company. The road above North Haverhill has now become in full a part of its own road, and all the interests of the line from Concord to the White Mountains and Northumberland are united under its entire control and management."



The White Mountains (N.H.) R. R., at least prior to its lease to the Boston, Concord & Montreal, was in a quiet backwater of the rush of events, the violent competition and clashes of policy that concerned the Boston, Concord & Montreal and the railroads to the South of it known as the "lower roads." Fortunately, after the lease, the desire to expand all over the area North of Franconia took up much of the attention of the Management.



In the Spring of 1853, James M. Whiton of Plymouth was called suddenly to assume temporary charge of the Boston, Concord & Montreal and his report in 1855 was a most modest and factual one, making one brief reference to the unsettled state of relations with the "lower roads." These relations seem to have concerned principally the rate-making and revenue dividing practices which were apparently discriminatory against the New Hampshire railroads. In his report in 1856, however, Mr. Whiton removed all restraints on himself and revealed what he considered to be the true state of affairs in strong language. "But we have the Boston & Lowell Road demanding a dollar a ton from the New Hampshire roads for merely furnishing motive power to haul freight, while they carry coal from Boston to Lowell, furnishing everything, cars and all for fifty cents. There is at this moment an attempt being made by conspiracy so extensive if successful, to shut out the whole trade of New Hampshire from the Seaboard

(including other ports beside Boston) except on terms that may be dictated by self-constituted guardians, and the power of correcting this evil rests with the Legislature only." Mr. Whiton suddenly died the following year, no doubt suffering from extremely high blood pressure.



An interesting sidelight on railroading in the era when the White Mountains were being opened by rail comes from Whiton's report in which he discussed operating expenses. "The oil heretofore used has been the best sperm. The large advance in the price of that article has led us to experiment with other lubricating material free from the objections that exist to inferior oil. There is good reason to believe that a substitute for sperm oil will be found, whereby a considerable reduction in this item of expense may be effected." It is too bad that this very able railroad executive could not have been spared to see how right he was.



Under the ambitious policies of expansion of the Boston, Concord & Montreal management, agitation for surveys for extension of the White Mountains line to Whitefield and Lancaster began, around 1862, resulting in some of the proposed routes actually being surveyed in 1866. Apparently, the whole idea had to be laid aside during the Civil War, but was promptly undertaken when peace came.



On October 1, 1869, the six miles extension to Wing Road in Whitefield was completed, but a sudden and severe freshet that Autumn carried away the bridge and abutments at Littleton, delaying the operation to Wing Road until the first of the year. The desire to continue North, as permitted by the charter, to a connection with the Grand Trunk in Northumberland was burning in the breasts of the Board, and so they pushed on to Whitefield Village in the Summer of 1870 and reached Lancaster that November.

The line was finished to Northumberland in 1872, the same year that the White Mountains (N.H.) R. R. was purchased by the Boston, Concord & Montreal. Both passengers and freight were handled and business was up to the expectations of the Directors. While all this was going on in 1872, the line was extended from Wing Road to Bethlehem Junction. In 1873, it was continued to Twin Mountain, and one year later to Fabyans.



Now the stage was set for the most dramatic connection of all. Under the restless driving of Sylvester Marsh, then a resident of Littleton, later of Concord, and previously of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, Chicago, and Brooklyn, a *cog railway* had been completed in 1872, after three years of construction, and was taking people to the highest point in New England, the summit of Mt. Washington. Mr. Marsh, in 1883, was asked how he happened to have got the idea of a cog railway up New England's highest mountain. His own words were: "I built it for a pastime and to cure the dyspepsia more than anything else. I retired from business in 1855. After living a few years doing nothing, I had the dyspepsia very bad, and was compelled to do something to save my health. I got this idea and worked upon it and built different models of it until I worked it out. It was ridiculed a great deal, and was laughed at, but it cured the dyspepsia." Possibly the fact that the cog railway was paying ten percent on its stock contributed to the cure of Mr. Marsh's dyspepsia.



The base station of the cog railway was only about seven miles from the new terminal at Fabyans. The Boston, Concord & Montreal directors saw the possible benefits of a direct connection at the mountain, and contracts for this extension were let in the Autumn of 1875. The great day came in July 1876, when it could be stated in big, bold letters "Passengers by our line are now enabled, during the period of summer travel, to leave Boston at eight o'clock a.m. and reach the top of Mount Washington (without change of cars, except at the base of the mountain) before sunset the same evening."

It is worth recording that in that year, a little over 75 years ago, it was explained that the Summer had been a peculiarly unfavorable one for summer travel because of a depression in business and, more significant, because the great Centennial Exhibition of 1876 at Philadelphia was the outstanding attraction of the season and had diverted thousands from the usual mountain resorts. Competition for the tourist dollars is nothing new to White Mountains resort operators!



The attractions of Franconia Notch by now were being given their due. Samuel C. Eastman's *White Mountain Guide* in 1872 put the attractions of Franconia Notch on a very high plane indeed, thus:

"Here is rest; here is comfort. Beneath the shadow of these solemn mountains the weary soul finds composure. Selfishness and worldliness are rebuked. The most thoughtless are hushed to reflections, and a better understanding of life grows up in the midst of Nature's grand instructions. We do not suppose our tourist is in quest of mere pleasure; we believe him to be a better and nobler man than to spend his days thus. He is open to every good influence that will make life more rich and beautiful, and fair. There is no better influence than that which he will be sensible in the still retreat of Franconia."



In describing the Basin, Eastman declared: "The diameter of this rocky basin, formed by the continual action of the water and mingled stones and boulders from above, is about thirty feet in its shortest width, and forty feet in its longest. As you look down into these transparent waters, the bed for the basin can be distinctly seen, so fair and clear is their emerald purity. One is almost tempted to fling aside his outer garments and plunge into this luxurious and delicious bath. It is certainly fit for the ablutions of a goddess."



Salesmanship like this deserved support! There was enough confidence that a railroad extension into the Notch would pay off,

to inspire a group of eleven men, including: Richard Taft, Joseph A. Dodge, then Superintendent of the Boston, Concord & Montreal, John G. Sinclair, and Charles H. Greenleaf, owner of the Profile House, to charter in 1878 and complete in 1879 The Profile & Franconia Notch Railroad, from Bethlehem Junction to the Profile House, a distance of ten miles. The base station of the Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway today is in approximately the location of the old Profile House. This was a narrow gauge railroad, necessitating a change of cars at Bethlehem Junction. A branch to Bethlehem, three and one-third miles from the Junction, was constructed in 1882. In 1892, its stock was purchased by the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad for \$280,000; and, in 1896, it was changed to standard gauge at a cost of about \$40,000.



This opens up an interesting realm of speculation as to what would have happened had the railroad to the North been built up the Pemigewasset Valley from Plymouth, through Franconia Notch to Littleton. A connection was almost made. The Pemigewasset Valley Railroad was incorporated in 1874 to build a line of railroad from a connection with the Boston, Concord & Montreal in Plymouth up through the Notch. It was completed to North Woodstock in 1882, and immediately was leased to the Boston, Concord & Montreal. Only ten miles separated the Profile & Franconia Notch and the Pemigewasset Valley Railroads, but they were never to get closer.



Two more projects completed the extension and connections of the White Mountains Railroad. The line from Woodsville to Wing Road formed the base of a Y, with a southerly branch reaching through Twin Mountain to the base of Mount Washington, and the other running northerly through Whitefield to Lancaster and Northumberland. The third, or central branch, completing a three-tined fork, was the Whitefield and Jefferson Railroad that eventually covered the twenty-eight and one-half miles from Whitefield to Berlin. The line from Whitefield to Jefferson, about eight miles in length, was chartered in 1878

and completed in 1879. The road originally was built with iron rails instead of steel and was used to a large extent as a lumber road. It was owned jointly by the Brown Company and the Boston, Concord & Montreal. In 1889, the Brown Company sold out to the railroad, and the extension to Berlin was started that year and was completed in 1893.



The Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad, which ran from Portland through Crawford Notch was built as far as Fabyans, in 1875. The Portland and Ogdensburg used the Boston, Concord & Montreal tracks from Fabyans to Scotts Junction, just North of Whitefield, until 1889, when they built their own line from Fabyans through Whitefield.



There are great inspiration and encouragement to be derived from reflections on the deeds of these railroad builders of seventy-five and one hundred years ago. The absence of any reference to the Federal Government is important in these reflections. To them we can apply a description used by Clarence B. Randall: "The men who conquered our wilderness, founded our cities, wrote our laws, and began our businesses asked for no security. It is of such forebears that American free enterprise was born and such is its spirit." These were indeed worthy descendants of those worthy men.



The work of the railroad builders contributed mightily to the growth of commercial agriculture and industry in northern New Hampshire and all New England. Their railroads performed a function, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated, in promoting the White Mountains region as one of our Nation's leading recreation beauty spots. They made it possible a hundred years ago for thousands of people to learn the charm of the white stillness of a New Hampshire's winter day; the sparkling air of a bright October morning with the countryside ablaze with the

brilliant colors of autumn; and brought within easy reach a cool, refreshing summer vacation spot.



Franconia Notch, with the Old Man of the Mountains watching over it from his high vantage point, has been a constant source of inspiration to people of all nations as they have gazed in awe and admiration at this magnificent cut through the mountains. Low clouds obscuring the damp and rocky sides of the heights call to mind the aptness of a description which Tennyson once gave of an imaginary Eden which Franconia equals in every way:

*The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the Sea.*

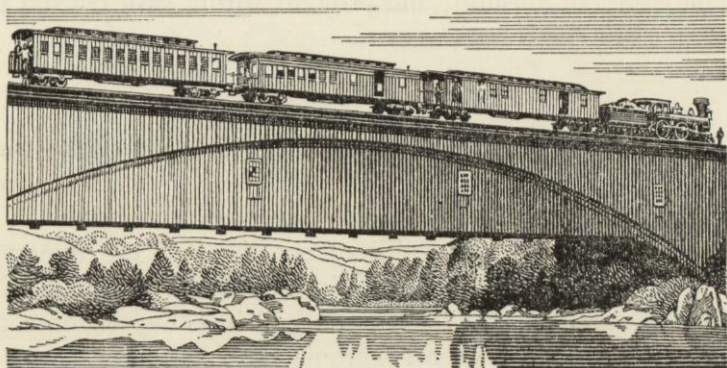


The efforts and sacrifices of those courageous New Englanders, the owners and managers of extensions and connections of the White Mountains Railroad, with whom we have been privileged to spend a little time today, will always be remembered for their part in opening to the World: the wonderful country "*North of Franconia!*"

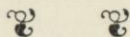
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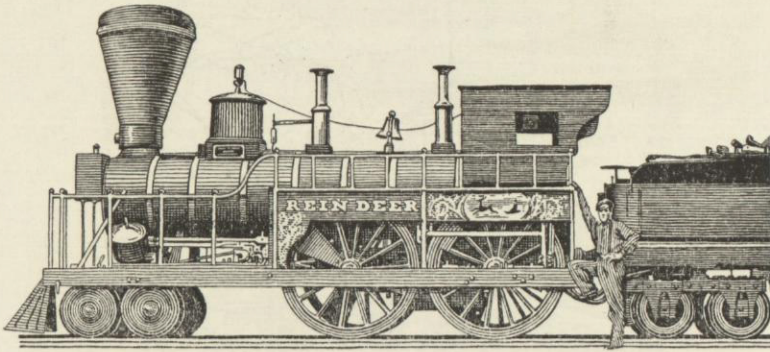


"Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda!"



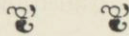
THIS NEWCOMEN ADDRESS, *dealing with the history of the first railroads in the White Mountains and celebrating the 100TH ANNIVERSARY (1853-1953) of the arrival at Littleton of the first railroad train, was delivered at the "1953 New Hampshire Luncheon" of The Newcomen Society in North America, held at Littleton, New Hampshire, U.S.A., on August 1, 1953. MR. EDGAR, the guest of honor, was introduced by MARSHALL B. DALTON, President, Boston Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company; Vice-Chairman of the New England Committee, in American Newcomen. The luncheon was presided over by RICHARD W. SULLOWAY of Franklin, Treasurer of the Sulloway Hosiery Mills, Inc.; Chairman of the New Hampshire Committee, in The Newcomen Society in North America.*





“One hundred years ago today a little steam locomotive bearing the name *Reindeer* puffed into Littleton over the rails of the newly-built White Mountains Railroad, having hauled a combination baggage, express and mail car, and a passenger coach with passengers from Woodsville, Bath, and Lisbon. This was the first step in the opening of the White Mountains by rail!”

—ROBERT M. EDGAR

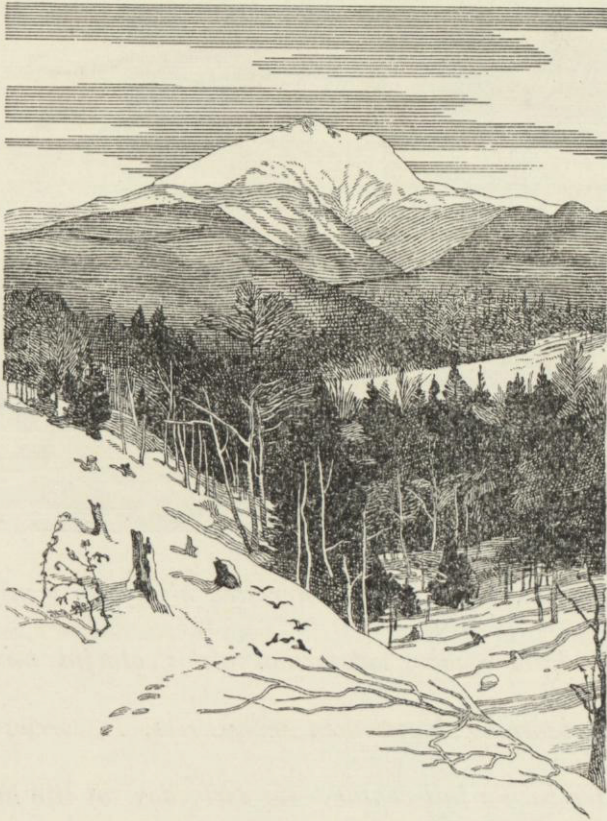




“In 1835, there were twenty-four States. In the next twenty years these increased to thirty-one. The Midwest and the Great Plains were luring New England farmers and merchants and this growth was the beginning of the powerful competition to New England farmers which saw the transition from self-sufficiency to commercial agriculture. The turnover in population which seemed quite general was commented on by a contemporary in 1835, who complained that not one man in twenty now lived where his father had lived or did as his father had done.”

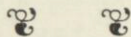
—ROBERT M. EDGAR





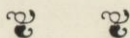
“The efforts and sacrifices of those courageous New Englanders, the owners and managers of extensions and connections of the White Mountains Railroad, with whom we have been privileged to spend a little time today, will always be remembered for their part in opening to the World: the wonderful country ‘*North of Franconia!*’ ”

—ROBERT M. EDGAR





AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, *interested always in transportation history, takes satisfaction in this colorful, human, and absorbing Newcomen manuscript. It carries the reader back a full century—to early days of life in the White Mountains as the American People long have known them: a great vacation area! Truly is it a glorious region, where valley and stream, meadow and pond, mountain and forest and lake combine—in scenery and surroundings of inexpressible peace and charm and beauty!*





THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND IN NORTH AMERICA

BROADLY, this British Society has as its purposes: to increase an appreciation of American-British traditions and ideals in the Arts and Sciences, especially in that bond of sympathy for the cultural and spiritual forces which are common to the two countries; and, secondly, to serve as another link in the intimately friendly relations existing between Great Britain and the United States of America.

The Newcomen Society centers its work in the history of Material Civilization, the history of: Industry, Invention, Engineering, Transportation, the Utilities, Communication, Mining, Agriculture, Finance, Banking, Economics, Education, and the Law—these and correlated historical fields. In short, the background of those factors which have contributed or are contributing to the progress of Mankind.

The best of British traditions, British scholarship, and British ideals stand back of this honorary society, whose headquarters are at London. Its name perpetuates the life and work of Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729), the British pioneer, whose valuable contributions in improvements to the newly invented Steam Engine brought him lasting fame in the field of the Mechanic Arts. The Newcomen Engines, whose period of use was from 1712 to 1775, paved a way for the Industrial Revolution. Newcomen's inventive genius preceded by more than 50 years the brilliant work in Steam by the world-famous James Watt.





*"The roads you travel so briskly
lead out of dim antiquity,
and you study the past chiefly because
of its bearing on the living present
and its promise for the future."*

—LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD,
K.C.M.G., D.S.M., LL.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

(1866-1947)

*Late American Member of Council at London
The Newcomen Society of England*

